

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 594-100....Continued Air - Ground Cooperation.....

The beginning of the month started off with 7 missions flown in continued cooperation with the XII Corps. The briefing was held at 0730. The squadron was scheduled to fly 4 ship missions. The AIC told the boys of the good gains made in both the First and Third Army areas. Elements were reported about 5 miles from Cologne.

Maj. Crisp led the first mission for the day. They contacted and worked with the 4th Armored Division who asked them to bomb the town of Sefferweich which was full of enemy personnel and equipment. The flight put all their bombs right into the town. The controller told them that he expected a counterattack from the northeast in that area. Flying eastward to north of Malbergweich, they strafed quite a bit of Jerry equipment with a total of 4 tanks destroyed, 1 tank probably destroyed, and 6 vehicles, a horse drawn and a gun emplacement destroyed. The flight saw our troops and panels just south of their targets.

Lt. Grace's flight was the next one in the area. After Maj. Crisp showed them the bag of enemy stuff down there, they took over. This flight bombed some of the tanks north of Malbergweich but only damaged 3. They caught some vehicles northeast of the first area and they strafed them. About 20 motor transports were seen north east of Gindorf and this information was passed on to the 4th Armored.

The weather was poorer when the 3rd flight arrived. Since they couldn't work near Sefferweich, the planes headed south at which time the controller asked them to strafe the town east of Bitburg on the Kyll River. After working over Erdorf they proceeded in to Kyllburg. Their bombing target previous to heading south was 4 tanks south of Balesfeld but there were no claims except for 2 damaged by strafing. This mission was the 596th one for the squadron with Lts. Ohlman, Winchester, Jones and Schnedler flying it.

Lt. Davis and his Purple flight flew the 4th one for the day. They bombed the reported concentration of tanks north of Malbergweich with poor results, then strafed and set one on fire to destroy it and damaged 5 others. The overcast prevented a good bomb run. The next mission led by Capt. Tullis, had to ask for a diving bombing mission due to the 2000 ft. ceiling. They took the job and returned home immediately.

Major Crisp led the 6th mission, which was asked to bomb the town of Malbergweich after redceiving the vicinity of the church at Sefferweich. After some more of the German equipment which was north of Malbergweich they returned. The flight bombed under the 2000 ft. ceiling which was still hovering above the sector. The 7th and last mission, led by Lt. Grace and his White Flight, was told to work east of the Kyll River. They suspected a small woods between Speicher and Herforst so they bombed it and also put 2 bombs in the town of Speicher itself. This mission landed at 1520 at which time a release was issued due to the weather. It completed another day of close coordination with the ground forces. Lts. Olson and Brizendine returned from England with X bar, and a new pup - "Jabo", a cocker spaniel for Lt. Howie.

3
SECRET

0032

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 401-411.....Some More Battle Area Strikes....First "Miss-
Bombing".....

March 2nd was one with 11 missions flown by the squadron. Briefing was held at 0600 to continue the air-ground effort with the XII Corps. They expected good weather all day. The All related that most of Trier was surrounded. The town of Saffarweich in the area our Thunder Bums operated yesterday was taken by our troops while the area up to the Kyll River was being mopped up. The bridgeheads across the Brit Canal were being strengthened opposite the Cologne area. The operations for the squadron called for half-hour intervals between take offs.

The first mission was led by Maj. Crisp. The 4th Armored requested them to recon the town of Baden which they bombed, all hits going into the eastern part of the town. The flight also looked over the town of Kyllburg for conditions of bridges for the troops entering it, but they were all down.

Lt. Galman's flight took over the area next. They bombed the town of St. Thomas which had 4 M/T's, destroying 3 of them. Northwest they checked with the controller, then searched some M/T's near Subach. When Lt. Davis and his boys arrived in the target area, they spotted a P-51 and one 387th going down on a concentration of vehicles near St. Fohren. Our flight did likewise and got 3 direct hits, destroying at least 3 out of the 15 on the road. Some fires were started, too. The immediate area seemed to contain about 12 vehicles and a motor. This was relayed in to the controller. The town of - - - - - had much enemy equipment.

The 4th mission was led by Lt. Hlagier. Working on the other side of the Kyll and towards the Mosel River, they found some M/T's north of Honzel, which they bombed. Lt. Miller took over the flight when Lt. Hlagier's radio went out. Hlagier bombed and got a direct hit on the southern part of the highway bridge at Riesport. The flight destroyed a total of 8 vehicles, and damaged 3 others by bombing and strafing. Capt. Bullis and his flight worked in the same vicinity, bombing Metzcrath which had about 12 trucks in it. A little further northeast they found some more vehicles which were strafed, plus camouflaged buildings which must have been air ammunition storage. One building blew up. The next flight, Maj. ...'s, received the town of Buedorf as a target which they bombed and strafed. The cub flying in the vicinity reported to the controller that it was a good job and good bombing.

The weather continued to have 8/10ths with a base of ... and towering to 3000 ft. in many places. When Lt. Davis and his flight came out to the target area, they bombed the town of Buedorf upon request and marking by the controller. Flying down towards the Fohren area to check the presence of the vehicles they spotted in the morning, they found them gone upon the town.

The first "Goos Bombing" mission was all set to allow the gas bombers to fly the first operational test. Lt. ... was to lead the 4 snips, going after the 300th M/T park north of St. ... When the photo recon boys arrived to accompany and take photos before and after bombing, they took off and headed out, but into bad weather. Because of this, they bombed some enemy targets instead

SECRET

SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

MISSIONS - 412-411.....Commendation.....

Starting on 11th, fair results, damaging an overpass and cutting rails at another point.

Lt. Blazier and Green flight, Lt. also flying his wing, took off to continue the close cooperation with the XII Corps. This was the group's 10th mission. They tried to destroy a railroad bridge with one element, but no luck. The other element bombed a small marshalling yard at Wangerom, destroying about 4 goods wagons. They too, started some Jerry N/Es before heading for home.

The 10th mission for the day was led by Capt. Tullis. They were asked to bomb the town of Bellingen, east of the Kyll. After bombing they strafed the town. The 11th and last mission for the day was flown by Lt. Davis' flight, his third for the day. When they arrived in the area, the controller marked and requested the flight to bomb Metterich. The boys got 6 direct hits in the center of the town. After strafing and damaging 4 vehicles, the flight turned for home and landed at 1418, completing a full day of close coordination with the ground forces immediately in front of the XII Corps. It was a constant turnover of flights to and from the target area.

MISSIONS - 412-422....Very Close Cooperation.....Commendation.....

On March 3rd, the squadron flew its record to date of 12 missions. These were 4 strike missions in air-ground coordination. The whole group was scheduled to work with the Third Army's 3 Corps. The briefing started at 0650, the squadron being assigned to the XII Corps for the entire day. After the S-C and weather men gave their information, Capt. Courtwright told the assembled pilots of the Ninth Army reaching the Rhine River in the vicinity of Dusseldorf and also the capture of Venlo. The enemy was trying to break off and get across the river. The day's operations for the squadron called for half-hour intervals between flights.

Maj. Crisp led the first 4 planes that took off at 0735. Arriving over the 5th Infantry Division's sector, the ground controller had the woods south of Badem smoked as the target containing enemy tanks. The major got a direct hit on one tank, destroying it. Lt. Hansen's airplane was hit by flak while he was orbiting over Dudeldorf so he put his two bombs on Badem. He couldn't see what his bombs did, but at noon the AIO phoned and had a wonderful bit of news. Army reported that this morning's bombing of Badem had destroyed 2 tanks, 3 flak guns and some German soldiers. American troops had entered the town soon after and reported this. The teletype sitrep which came into group late in the day said that "due to the excellent cooperation of the 365th Fighter Group, Badem was captured". Capt. Courtwright phoned soon after and notified us that a commendation was being sent up from the ground forces. All this news pouring in was an indication of what coordination in the battle area the Thunder Bums were capable of. This was further borne out in the whole day's operations.

The troops had crossed the Kyll River, were in the town of Metterich and were starting to approach Badem when our boys were

SECRET

0034

SECRET
SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 418-426.....Continued.....

working there in the morning. In fact, the troops were so close to the woods south of Badem that the first flight was told not to strafe in that area.

Lt. Ohlman's Black Flight was next up. They bombed Orenhofen on request and got 4 trucks when they put all their bombs into the town. Lt. Ohlman reported tell-tale marks of abandoned positions south of Speicher. Lt. Grace led the next flight to the area. They too, bombed the town of Orenhofen. The ground controller notified the boys that he expected a counterattack from German tanks with infantry on them coming from the northeast. A recce of the roads didn't reveal any enemy approaching Metterich.

The 4th mission was a pos.-bombing but due to the weather, Lt. Petrie and the flight found a opportunity northeast of Trier. The next flight in the XII Corps area was Lt. Davis'. The three airplanes bombed a concentration of approximately 9 tanks which were in the same woods between Metterich and Badem. Since the bombs didn't do any good, they strafed and destroyed 1, damaged 6. After looking over the area, they headed for home. Lt. Howie and his flight were the 6th ones to arrive in the area. However, the flight had to remain over the base for about half an hour under control because there was a report of enemy planes close. When they did finally get to the 5th Infantry, the weather had become worse - solid overcast in layers. They headed south and bombed the town of Talling, destroying about 6 buildings.

At 1130, Lt. Olson's flight headed out on course. "Smallshack" notified them of the tanks in the woods, which they bombed. The boys felt sure that they probably got the tanks with very good hits. They also strafed them and then received permission to strafe the town of Badem only 150 yards in front of our troops who were at the outskirts of the town. After they finished, the controller told them that they had done a "terrific job". Maj. Crisp led the 8th mission. They were asked to look for tanks in Speicher. In the vicinity of the town they bombed scattered enemy equipment, damaging 2 tanks and 2 trucks. After spotting a gun emplacement, it was called in to Serum Black - Lt. Ohlman and his boys. This flight put all their bombs on this gun, destroying it. They also caught a vehicle and 2 ammunition carts which they strafed and destroyed, the ammo carts blowing up. Lt. Davis and Lt. Jones were the only two planes to follow as the 10th mission. The ground controller told them of about 16 pieces of artillery south of Gindorf. Since they had only 4 bombs between them, Davis called and gave the target to Lt. Olson and his Green flight when they were approaching the area. Lts. Davis and Jones bombed these position near Gindorf and south-east of it. When Green Flight arrived they bombed flak positions south of Gindorf, getting very close hits.

The last and 12th mission for the day was led by Maj. Crisp, on his third. One element bombed 4 trucks in Seinsfeld, destroying 2. The other element, Lts. Dixon and Myers, bombed a possible headquarters building, then strafed it. The major's element then came in to join the strafing. They started a fire and an

6
SECRET

SECRET
SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION #418-430.....Continued.....

explosion resulted in the southeast part of the 3-story building. The controller claimed that they had destroyed the building. The planes were down at base at 1418.

The day was another full one devoted to very close cooperation with the ground forces. A telegram was sent from the 5th Infantry Division calling the cooperation "of superior performance", and quoted in the XIX SAC DIS # 200 dated 4 March (Copy of commendation attached). In addition, the division sent another report in through the G-3, Air, XII US Corps describing the excellent work of the last three flights of the squadron on the 3 March (Copy of report attached).

MISSION #431...Weather Recce...Weather Interferes With Operations...
Third Army Jumps Out.....

A briefing was held at 0700 on the 4th and the squadron would have supported the XII Corps again, but weather interfered. The AIO showed the front lines going up to Raeren, southwest towards Wetterich then across the Kyll river. We were also told of the link-up between the Ninth and the British and Canadian armies. Back in the squadron, the pilots awaited a take-off as they studied the position of the guns which Lt. Davis pointed out to them from his observations on yesterday's mission. However, the weather didn't improve. Olie and Waggoner went on a weather recce, controlled by Ripsaw 10, but the regular mission didn't take off at all. In the Daily Intelligence Summary put out by XIX SAC (430), for the period ending sunrise 4 March, under par. 1, General Situation, the following was related..."Further north, the 5th Infantry Division crossed the Kyll River and captured Radem with what Third Army described as excellent assistance from 368th Group.

March 5th brought another briefing at 0330. The 308th and 306 were going to support the XII Corps in its sector. A big show was to jump off with tanks to head out as fast as they could towards the Rhine with Koblenz and Andernach as objectives. The 4th Armored Division was spearheading the drive. The Infantry was to mop up. After giving the estimate of the situation and the whole Third Army's plan to really hit out, the AIO read the commendation sent us to the 308th for its excellent work around Murlenbach. To end the briefing, Lt. Col. Douglas told the boys of the praises which the Army had for the group as a whole. Again, the weather wasn't flyable and there was no take off. In the afternoon a meeting was held at group at which time Major (ALO) Davis briefed the pilots and S-2s on the more detailed phases of the push to the Rhine. Lt. Col. Douglas then presented a plan whereby the 3 squadrons would render best cooperation with the tank cover or general cooperation. The meeting was highlighted with the introduction of Lt. Col. Strong from the G-3 (Air), XII Corps, who had just flown in with his cub. The colonel was only known to the boys as "Bygone" who operated in an area where he happened to be watching their work and commended. Maj. Davis introduced him to all and he added a bit more to the meeting's interest. Towards evening the C-47 brought back Lts. Kerchner and Loeb from the Riviera but Lt. Cox had to remain there in the hospital. We later found out that he had a case of diphtheria.

7
SECRET

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

Extract from

KIX SAC DIS #200, dtd 4 March 1945:

L. O. (#) 308th Fighter Group flew 53 missions totaling 129 sorties, chiefly in support of Third Army's three corps by 4 plane flights. One toss bombing mission was undertaken, but weather prevented attack on the primary. To the Group's 308th Squadron went the following telegram from the 5th Infantry Division: "Fighter-bomber close cooperation furnished 5th Infantry Division on 3 Mar. 45 was of superior performance and accuracy, aiding materially in establishing division bridgehead across Kyll River. The bombing against enemy artillery positions between I-22566 and I-24948 completely silenced four-plus enemy batteries that had been putting heavy concentrations on the near bank of the bridgehead." On one early morning mission a flight from this squadron dropped two 500 lb. RDX bombs on Badem, reporting results unobserved. American troops entered the town soon after and reported that the claims should be 2 tanks and 3 flak guns destroyed and several enemy soldiers killed.

"COPY"

Through the G-3, Air, XII Corps US, the 5th Division sends the following report to the 308th Fighter Group: The last three flights assigned for the day (3rd March) consisting of 396 Blue, 396 Green, and 396 Yellow, did an outstanding job of cooperating with the Division troops. The flights attacked a woods at I-2057 today when our troops were but 200 yards away. Before the attack the division (10th Infantry) had received three artillery concentrations of 100 rounds, 40 rounds, and 60 rounds. After the aircraft attacked the woods no more fire was received. The weather was 7/10 cover with 1500 feet ceiling at the time. Two tanks were observed burning after the attack. BADEM I-1356 was strafed by the aircraft at the request of the Division whereby three AA positions were silenced. Our troops were 150 yards away from the target disposed in a horse-shoe pattern, complicating the safety factor for the fighter-bombers. As a result of the assistance of the bombing and strafing the troops moved into the town with very little resistance after the attack. A division artillery observer in a cub plane stated that the work of the aircraft was magnificent. Some nebelwerfer installations were knocked out in the attack.

"COPY"

SECRET

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION #424.....Continued.....

On the 6th and 7th briefings were held for 4 ship missions with the XII Corps, but the weather continued to be bad. The bomb line on the 7th had moved out along the Moselle River to Koblenz then north on the Rhine River. The armored column cooperation was scheduled with the 4th Armored which the ALO reported as last being 4 miles west of Mayen. The bomb line came in to give enough space should the armored boys really push out. The squadrons were put on a 1 hour alert. Lt. Col. Douglas told the boys to be especially watchful as they approached the Rhine with only 4 ship flights. The Laacher Lake field might still be operational. There was no flying during the two days.

The very exciting news of the Remagen bridgehead across the Ludendorf bridge which was accomplished on the 7th was a great and welcomed surprise. The weather still persisted as unflyable on the 8th.

MISSIONS # 425,26.....Armored Column Cooperation - But Weather Interferes.....

The briefings for the 9th of March were for armored column cover. The first mission was led by Maj Crisp. They contacted the XII Corps, then the 4th Armored, but couldn't raise him on the radio. Due to the solid overcast from about 400-4000 feet, it was decided to bring the bombs back and jettison them in the designated area south of the field.

The second mission was led by Lt. Petrie, but they found a solid overcast and couldn't work with the ground controller. The flight was released and flew a recce in the Koblenz-Limbourg area. They found a locomotive and 50 cars at Zollhaus. The train was stopped, but no damage was inflicted. There was quite a bit of rail activity southeast of Koblenz.

MISSION # 427.....Armed Recce....Lt. Loeb Leaves For U.S.

At 1256 on the 10th, Maj Crisp led a squadron mission going on armed reconnaissance. They contacted one of the XIX TAC controllers who tracked them to the Koblenz area. The 11 planes flew over a solid overcast layer and finally found a small hole. The town of Kamberg was believed to be bombed, starting fires in the center of the town. This was the only mission for the day.

1st Lt. John M. Loeb left the squadron to start on his way back to the U.S.A. being transferred to the Z.I.

MISSION # 428.....Armed Recce.....

March 11th had a briefing for the squadron to hit some barracks type buildings near Kinkel. However, the weather didn't permit any flying. On the 12th, the 0850 briefing was for the same target. The pilots stood by for better weather since the recce called for Worms, Mainz, Bingen, Kaiserslautern. The ALO told us that 2 more bridges had been put up across the Rhine in the vicinity of the original one at Remagen. The squadron was finally released from operations for the day.

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 428.....Continued.....

On March 13th, the briefing was held at 0600. The target - the same Kirkel barracks area. There wasn't much news about the fronts. The mission was held up on orders from command. There was no take off all morning and finally one was called in for 1400. Maj Crisp led this one as they headed out on course towards the target. Just as the major started to go down on the target, he spotted the civilian hospital markings and called on the R/T for no one to bomb it. Instead, the squadron proceeded eastward where some of the boys bombed a concentration of about 30 cars, 8 miles north of Kaiserslautern. Others bombed another train just south of Kirchheim Bolanden getting 2 direct hits with a large explosion and attotal of 13 cars destroyed.

Another mission had been briefed and ready to go after the planes had been serviced. This had to be scrubbed because of the traffic being heavy on and over the field which prevented them from taking off in time to get back to base at the scheduled time before dark.

MISSIONS # 429-432....Definite Targets and Toss Bombing...One Year
Combat.....

March 14th was the beginning of the group's second year of combat operations. Last year this day the unit became operational by flying the first mission over enemy territory when the group flew a fighter sweep from England to German occupied France. The 429th Squadron mission today was briefed to go after the storage warehouses near Montabaur. The 397th was to hit the hutment area near- by. The squadron was going to use the M-76 white phosphorus bombs for the first time. Lt. Col. Carbine was going to lead the two squadrons going out together. Our squadron was going out as top cover. Maj. Davis mentioned the building up of the bridge head across the Rhine and the fact that about 60 out of 120 enemy planes attempting to bomb the bridge had been shot down by AA fire. There was regrouping on the fronts and the Seventh Army was building up. Maj East told of the R/A which were coming up from the Frankfurt area and travelling along the autobahn towards the bridgehead in attacks.

Capt. Loughary and the boys got set in the squadron S-2, S-3 site. He led the squadron. When they arrived at the target, the 12 bombed the briefed target, getting 5 direct hits. The boys felt that they could have done better with the GP bombs. This was Capt. Loughary's first operational flight since he returned from his leave to the U.S.A.

The next mission was a Toss Bombing led by Lt. Petrie, with Lts. Taubert, Wawgener and Soderlund. Recce planes were to accompany them to take photos before and after the bombing. Dr. Whitson and Mr. Cotter were on hand to give the boys last minute details on sight settings and they were off to the planes. The target was the Hoppstaeden fuel depot. They got to the target and bombed by using the briefed long building adjacent to the railroad as the aiming point. There were no direct hits but close enough to inflict some damage.

SECRET

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 429-438.....Continued.....

The third mission for the day, led by Maj Crisp, was to go on the same armed recce as the morning mission, but a hot target was called in - a supply depot south of Boppard, on their first leg out on the recce. When the squadron started to bomb the briefed point they heard the 395th call for help against 38 enemy aircraft south of Mainz. The boys bombed hurriedly, starting a large fire in the woods there, while Clie and his flight bombed some barges. They climbed out and headed for the battle. However, when they arrived, it was all over. The results were called in at the critique after the mission as 4 E/A destroyed by the 395th, of which Lt. Col. Douglas got 2, and 6 for the 97th. It was as if fate had planned it for the group to get such a mission on its anniversary date.

The 4th and last mission for the day was again led by Lt. Petrie and the Amber flight. This time they went after the Eschenau railroad. They got a cut on the eastern approach but most bombs fell short. Dr. Watson was handy at the critique to get his information on the results of the bombing.

In the evening a dance was held at the Hotel Nacional in Metz for the 368th Fighter Group. It was a very nice affair. Father Cleary introduced a very good, small USO troupe which was very entertaining, as was the band's dance music. The local young ladies plus some nurses were invited to attend. Our Wing Commander, Brigadier General Sanders, visited the affair for a while. The evening was highlighted by the presentation of the big cake with one candle to commemorate the anniversary, which Lt. Col. Perego cut. The Padre's few words were very expressive as he injected his own phrases mingled with the Preamble to the Constitution. It was very well put.

MISSIONS # 439 to 438....Specific Targets...And Toss Bombing.....

Briefing took place at 0830 on the 18th. A definite target was to be hit on the first mission, led by Capt. Loughary. It was the Butzbach Ordnance Depot, north of Frankfurt after which they were to pull an armed recce to the east and north. Capt. Reinthal read about yesterday's encounters of E/A and command's warning to expect E/A formations up to 40 in number east of the Rhine. The Seventh Army was starting something in the south.

Capt. Loughary and the rest of the squadron were airborne at 0854, 12 ships bombed-up with 1 x 50 lb. M-76 each, and 4 ships as top cover. Getting to the target, they bombed and got only one direct hit on a building. Strafing nearby, they destroyed a locomotive and a switching engine. After a recce, they set course for home.

The next mission was a Toss-Bombing, Lt. Petrie to lead. The 2 photo recce planes landed at the base and went to the briefing with the boys. The target was the Bliesen Ammo Dump, northwest of St. Wendel. They arrived over the target and went down on it. The building which they used as an aiming point was at least damaged after they got through bombing, with 4 hits very close to it.

Capt. Tullis led the next mission after the planes had been

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 433 to 438.....Continued.....

serviced immediately by their crews. The target briefed on was the barracks area just west of Mainz. The target was bombed with results difficult to estimate. One plane bombed the airdrome at Ober Olmer Wald. Taking the armed recce, the boys came upon 12 enemy aircraft, mostly Ju-87's covered with brush, sitting on the Limburg airdrome. Strafing these, they destroyed 3 and probably 3 more.

The next Toss Bombing mission went after the Fishbach Railroad Bridge, a few miles southeast of Kirn. 2 of the bombs probably cut the eastern approach. Photos were taken before and after this one, too. When they returned, the same 4 pilots, Lts. Petrie, Holiman, Waegener and Taubert, went after their next target for the day. This time it was the Lauterecken Railroad bridge. The bombing of this one was poor with no hits observed.

The last mission for the day, led by Capt. Loughary, went after the group of buildings south of Werheim and at the north edge of the woods north of Bad Homburg. The 10 bombed-up ships did a good job here. Lt. Willie Dunbar got direct hits in the courtyard of the group of buildings. Buildings were set on fire from the bombing before the boys came home.

Four new pilots joined our squadron this day - 2nd Lts. Edward D. Storms, Milton B. Nichols and F/O's Harold M. Hansen, and Donald M. Harriman.

MISSIONS # 439-446....Variety of Missions...Dixon Gets An FW-190....
Bridgehead Cover.....

Briefing for the first mission on the 16th was called for 0630 hours. There was a specific target scheduled - the Mainz Barracks area. Lt. Olson was to lead the 12 ship squadron. The ALO pointed out the XII Corps crossing of the Moselle between Cochem and Koblenz, and driving south with the 4th Armored spearheading. An unconfirmed report of our troops in Bingen was mentioned. The 10th Armored was also ready to exploit any breakthrough southeast of this area.

Lt. Olson and the rest of the pilots worked over the photographs of the barracks area which was a possible supply dump west of Mainz, then went out to their planes, started engines and took off. When they arrived over the target area, only 1 bomb fell out of the target area. Several buildings were set on fire. Going on their armed recce, they caught a train at Niederhausen and destroyed its locomotive by strafing. In the vicinity of Weisbaden, Lt. Howie spotted an FW-190 beneath them. He was leading yellow flight at the time and they went down after it. Howie got on him first and put .50s into the E/A's tail. When he began to run out of ammunition, he called for someone to get after it. Lt. Dixon was the someone who put the finishing touches on. He shot the FW 190 down as it went into the town of Weisbaden.

The next mission was a 6 ship Toss bombing mission, led by Lt. Petrie. Their target was the Wolfstein Storage Depot, accompanied by 2 photo recce P-51's. This target was plastered with excellent results. The photo seen the next day showed the extensive damage inflicted and the fire started. All hits were well concentrated.

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 439-446.....Continued.....

Capt. Loughary led the next mission. At first they were briefed to go after the suspected supply center west of Mainz but this was changed just before take off. They were to fly to Koblenz and contact the controllers for further instructions. As soon as planes were serviced and bombed up, they took off and set course. Having been directed to the vicinity of Siegburg, they found some armor and vehicles which they bombed and strafed. Bert Loughary and Dixon found an open I/T workshop which they clobbered. Lt. Vuil had a little trouble and had to belly in near Herfanger, about 4 miles south of Herzig. He returned to the squadron in the evening with one of the jeeps from the unit which picked him up.

The alert ships were sent up at 1200 to try to identify an airplane and then checked bogies for the controllers. Lt. Petrie and his Toss Bombers flew out to attack the long span bridge on the Enkenbach-Grünstadt Rail line. Results of this one were only fair with the tracks possibly cut at the northeastern approach.

Capt. Tullis led a 12 ship bridgehead patrol mission over the Remagen area. The weather was poor while they were out there. It was very uneventful. The next mission was another 8 ship Toss Bombing led by Lt. Petrie. Their target was the possible supply center in the fort just west of Mainz. There were no hits on the fort, but one of the small buildings was hit south of the target starting a fire and black smoke. The last plane to land were the 3 led by Lt. Hansen on an alert scramble to check a red P-50. This alert was uneventful, too.

There was no activity on March 17th. The weather was bad, but good enough for local flying. The new pilots flew with some of the boys for orientation in formation flying and tactics. Operations received a call that Maj. Baer, Capt. Tullis and Lt. Kerchner had received the Silver Star, and Capt. Henry, Lts. Busenbark, Dixon, Dunbar, Hansen, Johnson and Brizendine received the Distinguished Flying Cross.

MISSIONS # 447-449.....Briefed Targets And Armed Recce.....

Briefing was held at 0700 on the 18th. The 390th and 397th Squadrons were going out together after railroad bridges near the Edder Lake area. The squadron's bridge was between Arolsen and Volkmarshen, northwest of Kassel. Lt. Col. Carbine was to lead the 2 squadrons, with Capt. Loughary leading our boys. The AIO mentioned the lengthening and widening of the bridgehead and told us about a span of the bridge collapsing. The XII Corps continued its drive south from its crossing of the Moselle and captured Bingen and Bad Kreuzach. The XX Corps started going east with the 10th Armored. After the colonel's briefing the squadrons left for their sites. They headed out towards the bridges and picked them out. The squadron's results were at least 6-8 hits on or very close to it, 1 of them being put on the target by Lt. Kerchner. Lt. Dixon went down on the deck to recce the bridge and took pictures of it. The bridge was down and the rails ripped apart. Coming home, Lt. Soderlund had to land at Trier, but he returned right away.

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 447-449.....Continued.....

The next mission was briefed to go after the stores depot south-east of Weisbaden and then to perform an armed recce towards Limburg. Capt. Tullis led this one, but the briefed target was covered by overcast. They found a marshalling yard at Loddelau, just off the east bank of the Rhine. All bombed here with excellent results, destroying freight cars, getting at least 6 rail cuts and one of Lt. Campbell's bombs hit an oil car setting it ablaze.

The third and last mission of the day was led by Capt. Loughary. They were not to carry any bombs but to cover the same recce area as the other missions did. The Germans were reported trying to complete a pontoon bridge across the Rhine west of Mainz and they were asked to recce it. This was an a ship mission and turned out to be the best one. There was an overcast in the briefed area so the 2 flights went to the area where Ripsaw had called in a concentration of vehicles. In the vicinity of Kusel, about 2 miles northeast of St. Wendel, they worked the whole area over with excellent results. Capt. Loughary's flight found a possible C.P. at Altenglan after spotting 3 motorcyclists coming in. They raked the place over with their machine guns, getting at least 50 enemy soldiers running around in the courtyard. They also found transports on roads and rid the Jerry of these. Red flight, led by Lt. Kercimer, found and destroyed 2 small tanks some vehicles plus about 8 ammunition trucks which kept exploding. Our own troops were seen about 10 miles northwest of the area they worked over.

MISSIONS # 450-456.....Briefed Targets...Newspapers...Special Target..

March 19th brought briefing at 0630. The target was the Weisbaden Stores Depot, Lt. Olson to lead the Squadron, carrying the M-76 bombs. Capt. Courtwright pointed out the probable position of the 4th Armored and the attempt to close a trap on the Jerries between the Rhine and the Saar. The squadron was first off for the day at 0750.

They arrived over the target and bombed it with good results. A couple of hits were in the briefed area with the rest in the general area. A fire was started with black smoke pouring up. Taking their recce area in the Limburg-Koblenz-Bingen route, the boys destroyed 3 locomotives.

A new target was assigned to the second mission led by Capt. Tullis - the Grossshauheim Supply Depot just southeast of Hanau. The 395th was to go after a target north of Frankfurt after which the 2 squadrons were to recce towards Fulda. When they bombed this supply depot, the squadron hit the northern end of the depot very well. Finding rail movement, they destroyed and damaged one locomotive each.

The next mission was a leaflet mission with Lt. Petrie to lead the delivery. They dropped these atmospherically fused bombs over Idar, Oberstein, Lauterecken and Weisenheim. When the mission returned they reported our troops close to all the towns which they went to.

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 450-453.....Continued.....

The last mission for the day was led by Lt. Col. Douglas. The squadron was briefed on a concentration of about 50 enemy tanks near the town of Prath on the east side of the Rhine southeast of Koblenz. The 12 ships were carrying Napalm on the belly and 500 pounders on the wings. They took off, set course, and bombed on the briefed woods. Fires were started and all bombs dropped in the area, but couldn't observe any other results. After strafing 5 vehicles nearby, they set out on a recce. In the Mainz-Singen area, 10 He-100s were encountered flying at about 17,000 ft. The enemy aircraft dropped their belly tanks and bounced our boys who were at 11,000. The 109's disappeared in the overcast but the squadron was too low on fuel to give chase. The E/A were not aggressive at all.

Capt. Ostow returned to the squadron from his leave in the U.S. He flew back with one of the G-54's. Eddie Byerson was probably on his way and Maj. Baer had received an extension on his leave.

MISSIONS #454 to 456.....All Toss Bombing Missions.....

The first mission, which was briefed at 0530 on the 23rd was going after the Harburg Ordnance Depot. Top cover of 4 was going to be given 3 Toss Bombing ships, led by Lt. Petrie. Dr. Whitson was present at the briefing, too. It was a very good target with the buildings concentrated in one area south of the town. The armored columns of the Third Army were still making good progress, as was the Seventh Army push down south. After getting the latest information about winds in order to get a correct setting, the pilots left the squadron S-2, S-3 site to take-off.

Flying north towards the briefed target, they ran into bad weather and turned south towards the Frankfurt area where the other squadrons were working. The northwest marshalling yard at Darmstadt was loaded with freight cars and they proceeded to bomb it as a target of opportunity, getting 3-4 cuts in the rail lines and destroying about 25 freight cars.

The next mission was also led by Lt. Petrie. They were to toss bomb the Mannheim M/T sheds. Again, the weather interfered, so the squadron went further south to Ludwigsburg, north of Stuttgart, where they bombed a railroad overpass west of the town. The rains were cut at both approaches after the bombing. This was the furthest south the boys had ever flown over Germany.

The 3rd mission took off after the Harburg Ordnance Depot again. Lt. Kerchner led the squadron of 3 Toss Bomb ships and a top cover. The weather had become better up north in the target area. When they arrived over the target, the planes went down on it and did a beautiful job of plastering. There were 4 direct hits in the briefed area, Lts. Kerchner and Dixon putting their 4 bombs on the largest building, flattening the whole structure. A total of 10 buildings were destroyed. The boys were very enthusiastic over their results when they came down. Lt. Boss remarked "Well that ought to be another target!" Percs indicated bomb plots on the photo rack then after a sketch for Dr. Whitson.

SECRET

8. WADSWORTH REPORT

MISSIONS: 454 to 456.....Continued.....

During the day, the new pilots went up and some were making good. Word came through that Maj. Parris received his silver star as did Capt. Parris, and clusters to their P.F.C.'s were awarded to Maj. Crisp, Maj. Baep, Capt. Benton and Lt. Deeb.

MISSIONS: 457-458....Rail cutting....Scenes 2/1, 2/2-3-4.....

Wagon 1st brought rail cutting missions. The first one was briefed to cut 3 lines east of Mannheim. Later waves in the air were to work on the same type mission in order to prevent the enemy from bringing up reinforcements. Each squadron had a separate line to cut. AIO Courtwright told us of Worms capture and our troops were on the outskirts of Mainz, also in Kaiserslautern. This day had captured a record bag of 15,000 prisoners in one day. The weather wasn't too good and back in the squadron, the pilots went out to their planes but were recalled due to too low visibility.

A take off was then called in for 11:30, Maj. Crisp leading. Two of the P-47's carried 1 x 500 lb. They headed out and bombed the section nearest to Mannheim. Enemy aircraft were called in after 5 of the ships had bombed and cut the tracks. The rest had to jettison their bombs as they all climbed for altitude. When they spotted 15 mixed FW-190's and Me-109's below them and approaching southeast of Mannheim, the squadron bounced the 5/1. These battles evaded combat. Maj. Crisp and Lt. Ohlman each damaged a 109. There were other F47's in the area. An Me 262 jet whizzed some of the boys by.

Right after the above mission took off, Lt. Newhart was taking off to lead a training flight when there was a possible malfunction of his controls. The plane immediately started to lose altitude and crashed east of the field. Newt was hurt and taken to the 6th Convalescent Hospital on the road to Verdun. The plane was a wreck, with parts all over the field it landed in. He wasn't hurt too badly but had to remain in the hospital for 3 days before he brought him back to the Group Dispensary.

Capt. Dougherty led the next mission with Capt. Stum flying his first mission since he returned from his leave. Lt. Wojesner was leading Purple Flight. They were going after the same rail targets. The 3 flights bombed the double track railroad that was hit on the first mission. Only one cut resulted from the 11 bombs. Flying a recce, they spotted many locomotives and freight cars in the vicinity area. After calling in this to the controller, the squadron went down to strafe the great concentration of rolling stock, inflicting quite a bit of damage.

Lt. Olson went up on a test hop in the afternoon and had to belly the plane in. The plane had a tendency to put its nose down in the air.

MISSIONS: 459-461....Railroad Targets.....

The next day's missions were still directed against enemy railroad facilities. Briefing for the first mission was at 0700.

SECRET

SECRET
SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS 489441.....Continued.....

The target - one of the railroad bridges south of Fulda. Boss bombers were going after the bridge, with a diving tank top cover. The ground forces were clearing up the area towards the Rhine River as the AIC gave a report on the situation. The pilots returned to the squadron site and prepared for the mission. The major was going to lead the mission but his engine kept cutting out and he had to return. Lt. Wilson took over the lead of the squadron as they headed out on course. When they approached the briefed target, it was beginning to be covered with an overcast, coming in from the north. Finding a workable area a little further south near Tielenshuben, they bombed a railroad bridge getting a cut on each end of the bridge.

After the first mission, Capt. Dougherty led a Boss bombing squadron to the same briefed target south of Fulda. They, too, bombed a bridge and the railroad further south from the briefed one. The 3 parallel lines in the vicinity were cut out and the bridge probably hit. The smoke around the target prevented good observation. The last mission for the day was briefed to go after the same bridge but this was changed to an armed reconnaissance without bombs, with the primary mission to go after rail traffic in the Bensfeld-Neuenstein area. Capt. Criss led this mission on this one, but it was a very uneventful one. The other squadrons were shooting up some stuff further south, evidenced by the fires and smoke where they were working.

MISSIONS 489441.....Third and Success Same!.....Armed Recon.....

March 2nd brought a 30 min briefing. When we walked into the briefing room, the bomb line was across the Rhine between Ludwig and Oppenheim. The squadron was to perform armed recon with two bombs in the Darmstadt-Graben-Neuenstein area. The crossing was made by the Third Army during the night of the 1st. The AIC didn't have much detail about the crossing yet. The squadron was to recon south of the bridgehead looking for traffic and enemy troops at a point to come up to the bridgehead. Lt. Harris led the first mission. When they arrived over the area, the overcast turned from an enemy aircraft in the Frankfurt and Frankfurt areas. Since they were in the vicinity and some He-111s were seen hitting the coast, the boys determined one could go over the Ludwig area, starting some fires. On landing the recon, they found some activity, including some destroyed locomotives and damaged freight cars.

Capt. Gullis led the next mission. They attacked the bridge at Fulda with half of their bombs were dropped and damaged a He-111 and 2 unidentified He-111s. The rest of the boys bombed some freight cars and a locomotive, including some damage. Going down to strafe a set of damaged freight cars. Lt. "Alfred" Seamerley spotted a gasoline truck which he strafe and caused to blaze up, while one of the boys started a fire in one of the stationary fuel tanks at the station. Capt. Gullis destroyed a gun position which was down at the boys.

The last mission for the day was led by the major. Lt. Nichols and 1/2 squadron were in this last operational mission with the squadron. It was the same type of recon. This wasn't too eventful.

SECRET 18

SECRET

SECRET

MISSIONS 461-462.....

They found the small marshalling yard at Oberstedt with about 70 freight cars. Coming with their wings, they destroyed cars and set some buildings on fire. Our troops were seen for the first time across the Rhine by our pilots when they flew over Herchen, south of Frankfurt.

MISSIONS 465-470..... Missions - 34 sorties.....

March 24th was a record day for the number of sorties flown by the squadron with six missions, no aborts. The first briefing was held at 0500. The squadron was to be on area cover from Mannheim to the northeast of the bridgehead. Each squadron was given a different area to patrol. The AIG told the assembled pilots that it was the 5th Infantry Division which was across the Rhine. A pontoon bridge was now established, but there was no other definite news.

The first mission was led by Capt. Loughary. They had to take off at 0800 with their navigation lights on. The area cover was uneventful when they were relieved by Lt. Petrie and the incoming squadron. Loughary and the boys found a train going east northeast of Darmstadt. Strafing it, the locomotive was destroyed and the first car behind it blew up. There was much rail activity going on but they couldn't go down to strafe at random because their prime mission was to destroy enemy aircraft. Lt. Petrie's mission had Lt. Storms and P/O Hansen on their first operational mission. Their cover was uneventful, too, except for the strafing of a 30 car train after being relieved.

The third one was led by Maj. Crisp. After another uneventful patrol, they strafed a train south of Darmstadt destroying the locomotive. Capt. Tullis and the next S snips relieved them and this mission received permission to go down after targets, destroying an oil truck and some W/Ts. Capt. Ostow and the next #2 2 flights came into the area. Their's was a very uneventful mission. Lt. Col. Douglas led the next one. They flew near the Wertheim airfield where they spotted enemy planes parked, and one coming in to land. The flak defenses didn't permit an attack. Before coming home they strafed some freight cars. The 7th one was another very uneventful one, Maj. Crisp leading it.

The last mission was the "8 Hot-Rocks, or Old Boys Mission". Capt. Tullis led this. The planes were bombed up with 500 pounders. The line-up: Capt. Tullis, Lt. Davis, Capt. Ostow, Lt. Waegen; Capt. Loughary, Lt. Petrie, Capt. Myerson (his 1st since coming back from his leave) and Lt. Olson. This squadron flew close coordination with the 4th Armored. They arrived in the battle area and were asked to bomb the town of Wahn. Complying, the boys put 9 out of their 10 bombs into the town, starting some fires. Lt. Olson hadn't bombed yet when the controller called and asked him to bomb the town of Oberstadt. He put his bomb into this town and started a fire here, too. One flight also strafed this town before setting course for home. Coming in to land they had their navigation lights on.

17
SECRET

0047

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 465-472.....Continued.....

During the afternoon, word came in over the radio that crossings of the Rhine were being made up north in the vicinity of Wesel by British, Canadians, Ninth Army and units of the Allied Airborne Army.

MISSIONS # 473-475.....Toss Bombing Sackenbach Railroad Bridge....

The 25th was a toss bombing day. The 0545 briefing gave the Sackenbach railroad bridge northeast of Lohr as the target. The planes were carrying 1000 pounders under the belly. Maj. Crisp was leading the first one for the day. Capt. Courwright gave the situation with a new crossing of the Rhine south of Koblenz. The bridgeheads up north and the Third's were being expanded.

The pilots got set for the mission down on the line and left for their planes. They arrived at the target and bombed. Most of the bombs wouldn't release on toss, which must have been due to the solenoid type of bomb release that the planes had for Toss bombing with such a heavy bomb. There was only one hit on the side of the eastern approach by Maj. Crisp which bowed the 4 rails. Nearby, they found some M/Ts and strafed them.

Capt. Loughary led another mission after the same bridge since it hadn't been knocked out. They got to the target and bombed it, causing only slight damage. Most of the boys had to bomb direct or try again on Toss after their first run. After strafing a train nearby, they set course for home. They saw our troops between Darmstadt and Aschaffenburg.

Maj. Crisp led a third mission after the same target, but this time they were going to bomb direct without the use of the AIBR equipment because of the weight of the bomb. With this try they rendered the bridge unserviceable. The tracks at the east end were cut. Maj. Crisp got a hit close to the north side of the bridge causing a break in the concrete and knocking pieces of it on top of the bridge. He went down to look at the damage before setting out for home. Odie Ryerson strafed a train east of Aschaffenburg on the way home.

During all these missions, photo recce planes accompanied the squadron to take photos before and after the bombing. Lt. Kerchner was placed on duty with Group Combat Ops for a while. A year ago this date the Thunder Bums came across the enemy air opposition for the first time claiming 1-0-5.

MISSIONS # 476,77.....Armed Recce....Lt. Myers Killed From Jump....

On March 26th, briefing was set at 0600 for an armed recce with 260 lb. frag bombs. The boys were to look for rail movements between Giessen, Marburg, and Lauterbach. Before entering and leaving the area, they were to contact the XII Corps in case there were any targets. Capt. Ostuw was leading the mission. They took off as scheduled but had to turn back from the Rhine due to the very bad weather conditions.

A briefing was held for a second mission to accomplish the recce. Capt. Loughary led this one after waiting all morning on a 1 hour alert.

SECRET
SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 476, 77.....Continued.....

All planes were up at 1321. The weather was too bad for good observation on a recce. One flight bombed Kamberg while others bombed a train, some freight cars, then strafed and destroyed 2 locomotives. The controller told them of a German radio station north of Kaiserslautern which was giving him trouble with jamming but they were too far from the vicinity.

In the morning, Lt. George Myers went up on a test hop and was going to fly to the bomb range when he had to bail out of the airplane. A report had it that the plane was on fire. He hit the airplane as he jumped and the rip cord wasn't pulled. Lt. Myers was killed as a result of this. His good spirit shall always be remembered.

MISSIONS # 478.....Armed Recce.....

Briefing wasn't until 1245 on the 27th. It was for an armed recce with frags towards Fulda. The new bomb line was heading eastward almost up to Lohr. All was going well at the fronts. Some elements were reported in Schweinfurt but they were pulled back. The squadron went out to the area, led by Maj. Crisp. They came upon a marshalling yard at Jossa, southeast of Steinau, where many freight cars and 2 switching engines were spotted. Most of the boys bombed here, destroying 1 locomotive and quite a few freight cars. After working this marshalling yard over, P-51's of the 354th Fighter Group contacted the squadron and led them to the Steinau area where they bombed the town with the 4 remaining bombs, then strafed vehicles alongside of the buildings. Fires were started in the town. Nearby they strafed other vehicles and also destroyed a tank. There was scattered vehicular activity. South of Fulda many buildings had white markings and civilians were seen coming down the road southeast from Steinau. There was fair to poor visibility in the target area and a ceiling of only 4-6,000 feet. They stayed under this all the time, coming home in the rain.

MISSIONS # 479, 480.....Escort.....Armed Recce.....

In the morning of the 28th, Capt. Ostuw was scheduled to lead the squadron on an escort mission with mediums going to a target southeast of Schweinfurt. The weather was poor, but they were to take off anyhow. At the briefing, the ALO told of our troops fighting in the southern part of Frankfurt below the Main River. The push out from the built up Remagen bridgehead was going very well, one armored column approaching Weisbaden. The escort mission was held up for a little while but was then permitted to take off. They were late at the rendezvous point but headed towards the mediums' target and picked up 8 A-26's coming out. They escorted these back and left them when well in friendly territory.

The second mission was to be an armed recce without bombs in the Homburg-Hersfeld-Giessen area. Primarily, they were to go after road traffic. Capt. Loughary led this mission. When they arrived over the Giessen area close to 500 mixed vehicles and tanks were trying to get berries out of the way of our advancing columns.

SECRET

SECRET

MISSION # 470, 471, 472.....Continued.....

The enemy was heading east, and it seemed like a rout. The Thunder Bombs went down to strafe the enemy on all the roads which served their escape. Capt. Dougherty's flight destroyed 8 trucks and damaged 4 others, plus setting 2 houses on fire in Antzenheim. Capt. Wyerson's flight destroyed an M/T and 3 staff cars at one place then destroyed a locomotive at another. Finding 49-50 mixed tanks, M/Ts, and half-tracks east of Laubach, they destroyed 10 and damaged 15 more. Capt. "Olie" Olson's boys destroyed 9 staff cars, M/Ts, light tanks and small vehicles and damaged 17 others vehicles. Our own troops were coming out of Miessen and heading northeast. This was another example of close coordination by the Thunder Bombs.

We received notification that D.F.C.'s came in for Lts. Krauss (L1), Howie, Olson and Grace. In the afternoon, Maj. Crisp received a telephone call from Group which notified him that promotions came in - Capt. Kerpner, Davis, Olson, and Petrie, plus 1st Lieuts Dixon, Johnson, and Richards. The major went up to the board and made the changes in front of the names of the pilots. "Porky" Davis was the first to be congratulated since he was in the operations section when the good news came in.

The squadron was released all day on the 29th. There was poor weather and no let up for the entire day. We expected some visitors, Maj. Gen. Jones and his staff of Air Inspectors. The boys were shown some combat film in the pilots' room. There was an excellent account of Lt. Citro blowing up an ammo dump. In the afternoon, a pilots' meeting was held. The general arrived at Group and visited the squadron, too. He was accompanied by Maj. Gen. Weyland and Brig. Gen. Sanders, respectively our TAC and Wing Commanders. Earlier in the day, Lts. Grace and Howie left for their 30 day leave in the U.S.A.

MISSION # 481.....Escort....

March 30th brought a 1030 briefing. It was for an escort mission with B-26's. The squadron was to rendezvous with the mediums over Laacher Lake and then to escort them to their target north of Schweinfurt. Capt. Dougherty was to lead this one. The AOC gave the situation and remarked about First Army's drive to the north and about the fighting in Frankfurt. The original take off was postponed 2 hours, and all planes were up by 1415 for the weather was expected to be better about that time. After making their rendezvous a little earlier than briefed, they had a very uneventful escort. At one time they started to climb in an overcast and didn't break out when they reached 10,000 feet, so they came down again, flew to meet the bombers coming out and took them back.

A new pilot joined the squadron this day - 1st Lt. James S. Mitchell.

MISSIONS # 482, 83, 84.....Armed Recce, Variety of Targets....

The early briefing on the last day of the month was for armed reconnaissance after escort mission was scrubbed.

SECRET

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 482, 83, 84.....Continued....

The squadron's area was between Kassel, Bebra, Fulda, and Neustadt. 12 strips were bombed up and 4 used as top cover. The AIO read some SHAEF announcement about the big bag of prisoners. Frankfurt was practically all cleared.

The first mission was led by Maj. Criss. They flew the recce, but didn't find much enemy activity. Suspecting some warehouses or barracks type buildings in the vicinity of Bischofsheim, they bombed these and then strafed some vehicles nearby. Our troops were seen in the outskirts of Kassel and Hersfeld.

The second mission, led by Capt. Ostuw, was a very good one. Flying in the area east of Kassel, they spotted 6 trains moving northward between Oberrieden and Hoheneiche. The boys went down on these and destroyed the 6 locomotives by strafing, since they weren't carrying bombs. 2 single locomotives nearby were shot at and damaged. Lt. Jones spotted some light-skinned vehicles on flat cars of one train and destroyed 3 of these. Near Raabach they found a concentration of camouflaged vehicles, destroying 7 and damaging 5 more. 18 more M/Ts were destroyed about 15 miles east of Kassel.

The last mission for the month was led by Capt. Loughary. They couldn't stay in the area very long because of the time. However, they found some Jerry vehicles east of Fulda. Lt. Oulman caught a half-track and gasoline truck. "Alfred" Schnadler chased a motorcycle then they proceeded to rake through 5 vehicles heading east. They worked over some more scattered enemy equipment then headed for home, completing the 91st mission for the record month of March.

A dance was held at the Officers Club in the evening, with a Special Service band supplying the music.

March showed what the increased tempo for the Battle of Germany led to. The squadron flew close coordination with the XII Corps in the early part of the month at which time excellent air strikes and teamwork was displayed. The commendations which came through were manifest of the Thunder Bums I part in the Air-Ground team. General Patton's men swept across the Kyll River towards the Rhine, then south to clean out the Germans west of the River. During this phase, our boys flew against targets in front of the troops. The Remagen Bridgehead was secured by the First Army and the Third crossed later in the month south of Mainz. The battle kept gaining more momentum with the rush into Germany east of the Rhine. The GAF was hit by our squadron with 1-0-2 claims. Again, the missions varied - Air-Ground Coordination, Toss Bombing, Briefed Targets, Escort, Patrol, and Rail Cutting. The squadron lost Lt. Myers, killed. Lt. Johnny Loeb returned to the U.S. and Capts. Ryerson and Ostuw returned from their leaves and are flying Thunder Bums again. By the end of the month, all bridgeheads from the 21st Army Group down through the 6th Army Group were expanded and going very well.